



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 6 : H04N 7/08, 7/10, 11/00, H04H 1/02, 7/00		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 97/29591
			(43) International Publication Date: 14 August 1997 (14.08.97)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US97/01849		(81) Designated States: AU, CA, IL, JP, KR, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).	
(22) International Filing Date: 7 February 1997 (07.02.97)			
(30) Priority Data: 08/597,432 8 February 1996 (08.02.96) US		Published With international search report.	
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(54) Title: MEDIA ONLINE SERVICES ACCESS SYSTEM AND METHOD

(57) Abstract

A system is disclosed for providing direct automated access to an online information services provider (34a, 34n) through an address embedded in a video or audio program, commercial message, or news story. The system operates with video or audio programs (15) which are received through broadcast, cable or pre-recorded media, and which are encoded in either analog or digital formats. The address of an online information provider is encoded in a vertical blanking interval or other non-displayed portion of an electronic signal which represents the video or audio program so as not to interfere with the programs as displayed or transduced on a television or audio sound system (22, 40). The online information provider address is detected and decoded from the electronic signal and used in establishing a direct digital communication link to the online information provider (34a, 34n).

